

We say on interstate highways you can build additional lanes on to existing highways and toll the highways, toll them with a mechanism. We use our high technology so there are no toll booths. As the trucks and cars go down the toll lanes, commonly referred to as fast lanes, they will receive a bill later for the use they put on the highway. That helps pay for those fast lanes. It is intended to relieve much of the congestion problem we are seeing throughout the United States.

The toll would be paid with electronic technology. There would be no need for a toll booth. The process can happen quickly, without requiring a decrease in speed.

If you wish to use the "fast lane," you pay the toll and do so. However, if you do not wish to pay the toll, you simply drive in the regular lanes, and that means just sit over in the regular lanes for an hour or two on some highly congested roads. It is your choice. But if you decide it is worth your time to go over and pay a toll to go on the toll lanes, then you can do that.

So this is the advantage of having toll lanes. I emphasize that when we talk about "fast lanes," we are not taking existing Federal highway lanes and putting a toll on them. These are new lanes we are putting on the side of some of our interstate highways.

One study found that if every State participates, this ability for States to put in these kinds of lanes could raise close to \$50 billion to go toward increasing road capacity.

I realize that it is unlikely all States will use this funding mechanism, but if a tiny fraction of that is raised, that is still additional funding for road capacity that does not put an additional financial burden on those who are not willing and able to pay it.

I see this ability as simply another tool in the "toolbox" that State departments of transportation can carry around. My staff continues to work with Senator BOND's staff to see that these provisions are included in the bill, and I appreciate the assistance they have given and their willingness to work with us on this particular provision.

Because this is a transportation bill, and not just a highways bill, as so many incorrectly term it, I would also like to make a few remarks on the mass transit title of the bill. I went through the Environment and Public Works Committee. I served on that committee, so I had some input there. I serve on the Banking Committee. In fact, I am chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation, so I had some input there. I am also on the Budget Committee. So I want to make a few comments about the mass transit side.

Before I turn to the specifics of the Banking Committee's bill, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Senator SHELBY. As chairman of the Banking Committee, he has worked diligently to make sure the committee's jurisdic-

tion was protected, while moving forward as quickly as possible with a positive bill. I also thank him for his willingness to work closely with me as chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation.

Finally, I also thank Senator SARBANES, the ranking member of the Banking Committee, and Senator REED, the ranking member of the subcommittee of which I chair, for their work on this particular piece of legislation. Along with their staff members, they have spent a considerable number of hours working to achieve consensus on many issues in the bill, and I appreciate their efforts.

I was pleased to support the Banking Committee's bill during our markup earlier today. I believe it makes important progress in a number of areas.

First, I am especially supportive of the new growing States formula. For far too long, the transit formulas have sent the lion's share of transit dollars to a small number of cities, primarily located in the Northeast. While we can all agree that transit is important to larger, east coast cities, there is no denying the need for transit services in a number of rapidly growing cities in the South and the West.

While I believe we still need further adjustments to the formula to even better address the growing States, I believe this new formula will finally help growing States begin to address their transportation needs.

I am also extremely pleased to see that the bill places a strong emphasis on rural transit. While many would consider "rural transit" to be an oxymoron, in fact, rural areas can often face even more acute transportation needs than large cities.

Last year, one of my constituents, Larry Worth, testified before the Housing and Transportation Subcommittee regarding the need for transit in rural areas. He described how rural citizens may not have any other alternatives to access medical care, jobs, and vital services. With 40 percent of American counties having no public transportation, this investment is long overdue.

There are a number of other very good provisions in the transit title, but I will not take the considerable time that would be necessary to enumerate them all. Suffice it to say that I believe the transit provisions will be of great benefit to public transportation in America. I am pleased to support the transit title, and I look forward to passage of the bill, preserving the provisions, and staying within our budget.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, we are checking with our colleagues on the possibility of setting a judicial nomination. As soon as we find out whether that is acceptable, we will ask consent.

Mr. President, we have heard lots of reasons why this bill is not a good bill, why we don't want to go to this bill, why we shouldn't be moving a highway

bill. I have talked about some of those reasons, but let me share with you some information that indicates how the people of America think.

The Zogby International Survey Group did a broad-based survey of American voters. Nearly 70 percent of the voters contacted, in February 2003, said they believe America is facing a transportation capacity crisis, that our Nation's roads, airports, and mass transit systems are struggling to handle a growing population and economy.

Fifty-six percent overall and 79 percent of young women with children said traffic congestion is depriving them of more time with their families or for leisure activities today than just 5 years ago.

I don't think these answers should surprise any of us.

Since 1982, the U.S. population has grown by almost 19 percent, the number of registered motor vehicles has increased by 36 percent, and the vehicle miles traveled has ballooned by 72 percent. And—surprise—over the past 20 years we have added less than 5 percent to road capacity, and even less than that to public transit.

What are the conditions of roads in local communities?

Forty-eight percent of those surveyed by Zogby said they were either fair or poor. When you move to Hispanic Americans, 75 percent said their communities have either fair or poor road conditions.

This is a problem in communities. This is a problem particularly for citizens who are maybe at a disadvantage in their community.

This survey's results come from a poll of over 1,000 voters nationwide, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percent.

I think some of the other findings are pretty important.

Eighty percent of the people polled think the Nation's highways and public transit networks are extremely important or very important to the U.S. economy. That is why we are here. Eighty percent of our constituents think highways and transportation networks are important. That is what this bill is all about. That is why we want to get everybody together to move this bill.

I urge my colleagues, if you have problems with particular portions of the bill, offer amendments. That is how this body functions. We would like to have good-faith amendments that seek to make changes which are necessary so we can move forward in a reasonable manner.

I think the people of America, particularly the 80 percent who say it is important, deserve to see us vote on issues that are of importance to them.

Eight in 10 of the people surveyed agree that an investment in highways, bridges, and public transit should be considered an important element in homeland security and national defense.

Ninety percent believe it is important that their representatives in Congress fight to ensure sufficient Federal